

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1.-31. **(Canceled)**

32. **(Currently amended)** A method of reducing the chances of infection in an animal's udder following cessation of regular milking or during involution comprising:

inserting a device into an orifice of a teat of the udder and into a teat streak canal following cessation of regular milking or during involution,

drying off the animal after the inserting; and

retaining the device within the teat streak canal after a build up in milk pressure that occurs immediately after the drying off without the device being ejected;

wherein the device is held in position within the teat streak canal without any part of the device extending outwards beyond an epithelium of the teat orifice, such that the device provides a barrier to passage of infectious agents and particulate matter into the udder.

33. **(Previously presented)** A method of treating an animal as claimed in Claim 32 including a further step of delivering one or more treatment substances to the teat streak canal.

34.-37. **(Canceled)**

38. **(Previously presented)** The method as claimed in Claim 32, wherein the retaining comprises retaining the device within the teat streak canal for a time sufficient for the device to integrate with endogenous keratin to form a composite plug.

39. **(Previously presented)** The method as claimed in Claim 32, further comprising degrading the device within the teat streak canal over time.

40.-42. **(Canceled)**

43. **(Previously presented)** The method as claimed in Claim 32, wherein the retaining is enhanced by one or more surface features of the device.

44. **(Previously presented)** The method as claimed in Claim 43, wherein said one or more surface features include one or more grooves.

45. **(Previously presented)** The method as claimed in Claim 43, wherein said one or more surface features include a spiral thread.

46. **(Previously presented)** The method as claimed in Claim 43, wherein said one or more surface features include a plurality of protrusions.

47. **(Previously presented)** The method as claimed in claim 43, wherein the inserting of the device occurs with minimal dislodgement of keratin.

48. **(Previously presented)** The method as claimed in Claim 32, wherein the device does not extend into a teat cistern.

49. **(New)** A method of reducing the chances of infection in an animal's udder following cessation of regular milking or during involution comprising:

inserting a device into an orifice of a teat of the udder and into a teat streak canal following cessation of regular milking or during involution, wherein the device is held in position within the teat streak canal without any part of the device extending outwards beyond an epithelium of the teat orifice, such that the device provides a barrier to passage of infectious agents and particulate matter into the udder; and

dislodging the device from the teat streak canal by milk pressure generated as a consequence of lactogenesis.